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ABSTRACT

One of a series of studies related to the Delphi research project: "Policy Instruments for Higher Education in the Western Europe of the Future", this paper presents material for the discussion and formulation of a European higher education policy in light of the single market introduction in 1992. The first chapter, "Hypothesis and Problem Formulation", proposes that the development of Western Europe calls for a supra-national oriented higher education policy and suggests five questions that flow from that hypothesis. The second chapter, "The EC (European Community) and Higher Education" focuses on EC activities and EC higher education in practice. The third chapter, "Towards a New European Higher Education Policy", outlines results of a study which surveyed 700 higher education experts, and offers suggestions regarding the major obstacles to enhance internationalization (maintaining national autonomy, languages, recognition of courses). This chapter also reviews previous attempts, possible scenarios, and the export of student grants and loans. The fourth chapter, "The U.S. Case: the Potentiality of Federal Higher Education Policy," assesses the balance of power within the U.S. system and its favorable aspects. The final chapter, "Towards an Agenda for European Higher Education Policy," offers a series of recommendations, a list of possible barriers, and a review of conclusions. Thirty-seven references are included. (JB)

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HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN THE EUROPE OF THE FUTURE

towards an agenda for European higher education policy

Olaf C. mc-Daniel
Zoetermeer 1990

Contribution to the EC-Conference "Higher Education and 1992: Planning for the Year 2000"
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INTRODUCTION

The importance of attention on internationalization in higher education policy, is undisputed. It has been the underlying assumption of many national and international activities and programs.

Rapidly changing societal conditions, in particular the introduction of a single market in 1993, strengthen the need for increased attention on internationalization. However, the consequences could lead to conclusions, which go beyond the methods now used to stimulate internationalization. Does the "tool-kit of policy instruments" (Hood, 1983) provide adequate methods to facilitate internationalization in the present circumstances, or should adjustment of methods be reconsidered?

For a discussion of this complex and basic question, the Siena conference could not have been organized at a more favorable time. As the central conference paper shows, the understanding of the practical impact of 1993 is growing. The coming two years can be used to evaluate this understanding and to draw conclusions on the possible direction of national and international higher education policies. Furthermore the Intergovernmental Conference on the European Political Union provides momentum for an assessment of the possibilities of real community higher education policy based on considerations of teaching and research in stead of single economic background.

In this paper some material for such a discussion is presented. The sources analyzed are threefold: literature study, the first results of a European Delphi-study (1) and a case-study analysis of a system of federal higher education policy (USA).

The scope of this contribution is primarily limited to the teaching

function of higher education institutions. The area of research which has already established a substantial international orientation is left unattended. Research and the effects of scientific progress is little affected by national frontiers. However, the prospect of further internationalization is likely to result in even more international research projects might influence the willingness of national governments to invest in basic research (2).

Internationalization, being the collective definition of almost everything that deals with foreign countries -their customs, cultures, knowledge and languages- can have many different faces. For each of the different stages of education: primary, secondary and post-secondary, the possibilities are quite different. The consequences for primary education will be limited to increased attention being paid to international aspects in the curriculum and the exchange of teachers, while the possibilities for secondary education will be more extensive. The most promising possibilities for increased internationalization are, however, in the field of higher education. One can anticipate a future pattern of the combination of forces of enhanced cooperation and competition between institutions, and a much higher degree of mobility on the part of both students and faculty.

CHAPTER 1. HYPOTHESIS AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

In this contribution the following central hypothesis is formulated:

> The socio-political and economic development of Western-Europe calls for a more supra-national oriented higher education policy.

If the hypothesis would receive any kind of support questions are raised as to what and how to achieve on a supra-national level:

1. could the present EC-activities, be upgraded to function as a vehicle for supra-national policy?
2. what are the boundaries for a supra-national higher education policy in terms of potential effectiveness, efficiency and system dynamics?
3. which are the limitations for a supra-national higher education policy in terms of national, political and bureaucratic boundaries?
4. which concrete issues could or could not be the subject of supra-national policy?
5. are there any examples of higher education systems that operate under the conditions formulated under 2 and 3?

CHAPTER 2. THE EC AND HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

At the time that the EC, and its predecessors, were established, the issue of European education was not on the agenda. The treaties had an economic background. It has only been since the mid-seventies that attention has been drawn to the issue of education and the prospect of enhanced cooperation. Starting in the beginning of the seventies, a joint meeting of the Ministers of Education within the community formed a platform for decisions. The first resolution dates back to 1971. It formulated in broad terms the importance of cooperation in the field of education. It was a follow up of the 1963 Council Decision laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy.

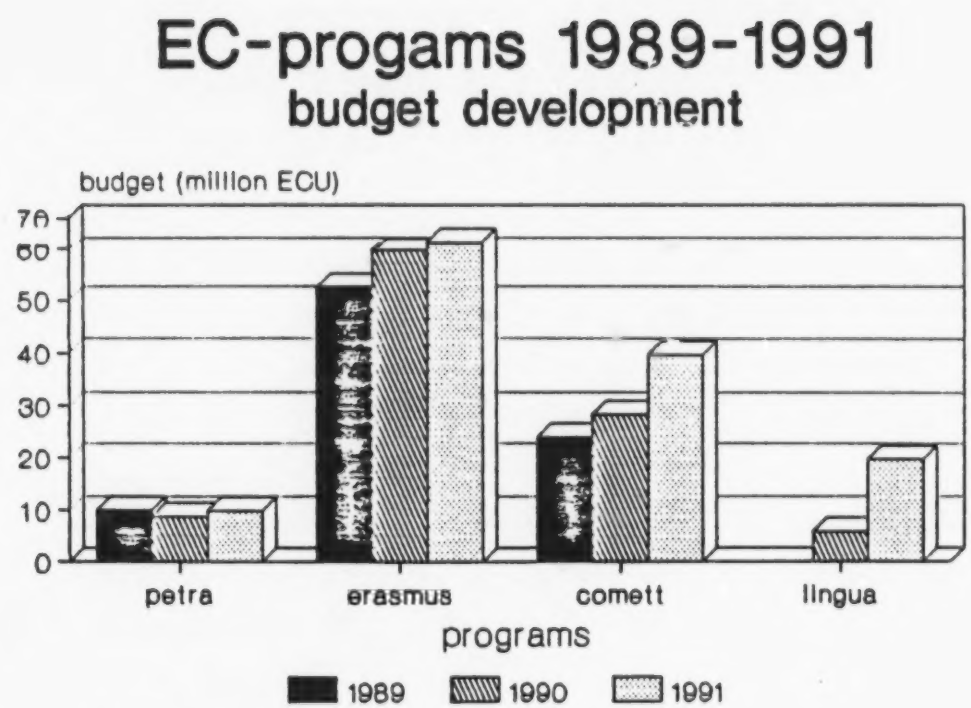
Starting in the mid Seventies three periods can be distinguished:

1. 1976-1986 The decade of exchange of information, expert working groups and a number of limited programs. The juris prudence of the European Court of Justice had a major impact on the scope of EC education policy
2. 1986-1990 The period of a number of major programs such as COMETT, ERASMUS, LINGUA, based on article 128 of the EC treaty
3. 1990-.... Consolidation and expansion of the programs, closer contact with the ETA countries, Eastern Europe and a fundamental discussion on a possible extension of the legal framework for EC involvement in education.

Furthermore, the establishment of a Task Force, combined with the budget increase for education, is an expression of the growing involvement in

(higher) education policy. The following figure provides information on the budgets of the four most extensive programs.

figure 1. Budget development EC-programs



source: EG budget 1991 p 385-391

8

A growing interest in the formulation of a European higher education policy is noticeable, but still overshadowed by national interests and the fear of undesired cultural dominance if educational structures were indeed to be subject to supra-national decisions.

2.2 EC activities

The EC-programs directed towards education can be classified under 8 categories (3). Many of the activities relate to more than one category. The categories are:

1. the issues of (formal) recognition of qualifications (in terms of [un]-conditional acceptance of degrees and modules in other countries than those in which they were conferred, for instance a number of directives and the ERASMUS program)
2. a stimulative policy towards mobility (for instance ERASMUS, LINGUA, PETRA, COMETT)
3. to enhance cooperation between institutions to improve quality and European Cooperation (for instance TEMPUS, ERASMUS)
4. the establishment of information networks and study centers (for instance EURYDICE, CEDEFOP, NARIC)
5. a number of activities related to improving the university-industry cooperation and the stimulation of research in technology transfer (for instance COMETT, FORCE)
6. programs aimed at specific target groups (for instance IRIS, PETRA, HELIOS)
7. programs to eliminate the crucial constraint in the construction of a single market: language as the Achilles heel (4) (LINGUA).
8. the institutionalization of an unit within the EC apparatus with responsibility for education (Task Force Human Resources, Education

Training and Youth).

2.3 EG higher education policy in practice

The attention paid to internationalization over the last decade has shown a drastic increase in all respects. The establishment of more and more EC programs on higher education directed towards an increasing number of constituencies, more and more money put forward to support the policy, and the creation of a task force in the Brussels bureaucracy for education policy (5) are all an indication of the recognition of the importance of higher education policy for the future of Europe. This list shows a remarkable progress. In chapter 2 of the Siena conference paper O'Callaghan et al describes and analyses the different programs and presents some issues for discussion.

Although the programs are successful, three specific threats need attention in the future.

First of all the present framework of cooperation and the type of program now implemented has reached the limits of this type of cooperation. If a call for a more supra-national higher education policy is answered, it will have to lead to activities beyond the subsidizing of programs and data collection.

Secondly, the decision process for educational issues is time consuming and the organizational structure in which these decisions is prepared should not lose flexibility. Overbureaucracy should be avoided.

Thirdly, the instruments presently used should carefully and permanently be subject to evaluation. Especially the position of the Council of the Ministers for Education "meeting within the council" remains unsolved (see for instance Buising, 1990 p. 30). Furthermore, the implementation of their

many resolutions by the Education Council and the little impact this seems to have in practice, should be the subject of consideration.

Nevertheless the phase of fruitless negotiations on supra-national issues has been overcome and the time is ripe to estimate the national desirability of a European policy that influences some aspects of national policy, without obstructing national or academic traditions and cultures.

CHAPTER 3 TOWARDS A NEW EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY?

3.1 Introduction

The basic attitude of most European countries to the establishment of a supra national education policy has been protective. Development of policy for education was not, until recently, connected to an international dimension. The development of national educational structures is traditionally a blend of the national culture and a reflection of the politico-economic structure. The fact that a national higher education system is partly an expression of the aim of preserving the national cultural heritage will in practice always imply a limitation on international orientation. But it is most likely that, in the coming decade, more and more European governments will be confronted with the choice of adapting their policy and structures in a certain direction or of remaining in isolation. The "increasing integration within the Community, (the) rapid transformation in Central and Eastern Europe and (the) expanding role for Europe in the world scene" (O'Callaghan et al p. iii) is the context in which Europe's higher education should develop.

In this chapter the plausibility and desirability of a European higher education policy will be analyzed. Contrary to the order of analysis normally used, this paper starts with the empirical and theoretical findings that limit the directing of higher education policy. In chapter 3.2 these limitations are illustrated by recent studies. It is with this knowledge that the discussion on the potential and desirability of a European higher education policy should be based. Any other order might lead to unrealistic views on the possibilities of a European higher education policy. In chapter 3.3 issues are distinguished, derived from a Delphi study, that could be subject of European higher education policy. In

chapter 3.4 the major short term problems facing a European higher education policy will be analyzed.

3.2 Theoretical discourse: the boundaries of higher education policy

If the idea of a supra national policy for higher education is accepted as a starting point, the experiences with national higher education policy form a useful and instructive frame of reference. Generally speaking the experiences with a centralized higher education policy are not very favorable. Evaluations of national higher education policy show substantive lack of success in those cases in which attempts are made to reorganize the system on a top-down basis. Van Vught et al (1989) shows that the effect of government steering is limited and in those cases in which it has some effect often not very productive. Analyzing a number of large scale government directed innovations, Cerych and Sabbatier (1986) conclude that governmental efforts to redesign the higher education system lead from "great expectations" to "mixed performance". These European studies are well known and need no further explanation. Similar lack of government success in higher education policy are found in US studies. Volkwein (1986 and 1989) examined the relationship between (US state) governments and higher education institutions and found no relationship between the level of government intervention and institutional quality or the administrative costs. Government intervention however was negatively interfering with the institutions' ability to improve their financial position, which had much more impact on the quality of the institution than any of the government regulation. In this respect government intervention had a negative effect on quality. A study of the Carnegie Foundation (1982) showed the limits to government's capacity to regulate higher education. "We conclude that

improvement will not come from better management of the government's regulatory functions, although this is certainly a worthy goal to be pursued. Instead, the academy must rediscover more effective ways to regulate itself" (p. 67). In two recent and extensive studies Newman (1987, p. 35) describes the present relationship between government and higher education institutions in the USA as an "ineffectual relationship" while Hines calls for a more "effective partnership".

In the Delphi study mentioned in chapter 1 (mc-Daniel, 1991, forthcoming) a large number of questions were directed towards an evaluation of the present success of policy direction by governments. The results show a clear consensus regarding the statements that :

a. the nature of higher education (the generation and transfer of knowledge) intrinsicly limits effective government policy directing
b. the generation and transformation of knowledge is ill-served by government interference
c. government interference in higher education policy is often counter productive
d. the complexity of the higher education system and the high degree of specialization offers higher education-institutions much scope for avoiding and ignoring government direction.

Furthermore, a large majority of the participants assessed government policy measures and policy direction over the last decade as being of little or no success regarding: administering the system, planning of facilities, the funding of institutions, solving current problems, guarding the quality of teaching, facilitating participation and translating new demands into the system.

The results of the studies mentioned above point in the same direction.

There are significant limitations to the formulation and implementation of higher education policies by national (or in the US by state) governments. There is no reason to believe that these limitations should not apply for any type of supra-national higher education policy formulated by, for instance, the EC. Given the size of the EC and the institutions in the 12 countries, the weak points in the central formulation of a higher education policy on a national basis (for instance : insufficient knowledge of the situation on the workfloor, lack of support from the workfloor, uniform solutions for heterogeneous problems, lack of evaluation and follow up and bureaucracy) will be even more important for this level.

Any future higher EC education policy should acknowledge these findings.

3.3 Delphi-study: Policy instruments for higher education in the Western Europe of the future

3.3.1 Introduction

In three consecutive questionnaires 700 higher education experts were asked to score a large number of statements regarding the future of higher education policy. Among the issues addressed, a number of questions in the three rounds focussed on the desirability and possibility of a more centralized European higher education policy. In this section some of the draft statistics will be used to monitor the issues of future European higher education policy. As already mentioned, the report, including the European section, will be completed at the beginning of 1991.

interpretation of the scores

The three questionnaires contained in most cases statements that had to be judged in terms of appreciation. The scale was from one to seven, in which 1 represents a strong disagreement and 7 a strong agreement. For reasons of statistical reliability, the line of sufficient and insufficient support is drawn at 3.80. This implies that in examples in which scores are presented, a score below 3.80 implies insufficient support and from 3.80 upwards sufficient support.

Three accompanying remarks should be made.

First, the methodology used, an interactive Delphi-method, requires careful analysis and interpretation. In the final report the issue of plausibility and reliability will be illustrated.

Secondly, the scores represent the opinions of experts who were asked to judge statements in a specifically created setting. Rejection or acceptance of a statement reflects the opinion of these experts and is not necessarily

right or wrong.

Third, the results used in this contribution are the product of relatively simple statistical techniques. More advanced analysis was not (yet) available but will be presented in the final report (including a more precise estimate of the statistical reliability of the material).

3.3.2 Expectations

In the first round of the project, two conflicting statements were presented to the participants. "The opening of the borders after 1992 calls for the development of a centralized European higher education policy" (alternative 1), and the contrary "...does not call for a centralized European higher education policy" (alternative 2).

The first alternative, "yes" to a the central policy, scored below the statistical border of agree and disagree.

The second alternative, no central policy, received substantial support.

The variety of opinions on these issues within the 8 separate groups of interest (see note 1) and within the separate countries is remarkable. It shows the following picture:

figure 2. a central European policy ?

country	agree with central Europ h.e. policy	do not agree with central Europ. h.e. policy	Central European h.e. policy yes/no
Austria	2.44 SD 1.68	5.50 SD 1.65	no
Belgium	5.00 SD 2.20	3.00 SD 2.22	yes
Denmark	3.31 SD 1.85	4.89 SD 2.05	no
FR.Germ.	2.90 SD 1.74	5.24 SD 1.66	no
Finland	2.90 SD 1.64	5.04 SD 1.65	no
France	5.54 SD 1.80	2.41 SD 1.97	yes
Greece	4.50 SD 1.91	4.25 SD 1.25	undec.
Ireland	4.21 SD 2.32	3.28 SD 2.16	yes
Italy	5.27 SD 2.24	2.90 SD 2.16	yes
Luxemb.	5.60 SD 2.60	2.20 SD 2.68	yes
Netherl.	3.14 SD 1.67	4.87 SD 1.79	no
Norway	3.07 SD 1.65	4.75 SD 1.85	no
Portugal	4.88 SD 1.93	3.66 SD 2.24	yes
Spain	5.05 SD 1.89	3.16 SD 2.03	yes
Sweden	2.36 SD 1.43	5.76 SD 1.42	no
Switzerl.	4.45 SD 1.98	3.80 SD 1.98	yes
Un.Kgdom.	2.93 SD 1.86	5.07 SD 1.95	no

note 1. SD = standard deviation
h.e. = higher education

note 2. participation rates of Greece, Italy and Luxembourg are too low to meet any standard of generalization

note 3. scale is 1 - 7. 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree
scores above 3.80 can be interpreted as (increasing) support for the statement presented.

Membership of the EC or ETA has no effect on the judgement represented by the combined country scores. Countries in which the "no" to a centralized European policy was the most clearly supported by a "yes" to the absence of a centralized European higher education policy are, Austria, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Sweden and the UK. The reverse (agree with centralized policy, disagree with its absence) can be observed in the country scores of France, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain.

National politicians, as a group, were the strongest in their opposition to a central European higher education policy, and the strongest in support of "no" central policy. This idea of potential loss of control of higher education issues at the national level, is not apparently attractive.

Combining these scores in the following round of the study, the statement "higher education in the future should enhance internationalization, in which a supra-national body (for instance the EC) has a stimulating but non-administrative function" was presented. The score (5.88 SD 0.99) showed consensus, even within the group of participating politicians.

3.3.3 Competition

An alternative scenario for a government-directed national or supra-national higher education policy, could be a more self-regulatory system in which institutions can shape their own policy on the basis of mutual competition. Indeed, the statement that "the opening of the borders after 1992 calls for more international competition between institutions" received strong support. On the subject of possible competition, four issues received specific attention according to the respondents. Types of competition that could serve a positive role are (ranked in the order of support given):

1. competition for highly qualified academic staff,
2. competition related to quality of individual institutions,
3. competition for students,
4. competition for international funds.

3.3.4 Conclusion: limitations of European higher education policy

This leads to the conclusion that the consequences of the introduction of a

single market are important for higher education and scientific research. There is a need for a policy of stimulation and coordination at the European level, but which is clearly not an administrative power. Increased competition between institutions in future European higher education is widely accepted as an important force.

3.3.5 Towards a policy of active encouragement

What could, or should, be the subject of a policy for coordination and encouragement? In the study the respondents were presented with a number of more or less concrete issues. According to the interpreted response, the following subjects could be subject to a more harmonized European higher education policy (ranked in the order of support received):

* the introduction of interchangeable teaching modules,
* the harmonization of titles and qualifications,
* the development of an international quality assessment system,
* the classification of disciplines,
* the harmonization of curriculum regulations, regulating a minimum content for studies,
* the harmonization of the educational model and the course length,
* the introduction of a Europe-oriented core curriculum.

3.3.6 The objective of mobility

As could be expected, the participants were strongly in favor of the enhancement of international student (and staff) mobility. The most important present EC-program aimed at this goal, ERASMUS, was almost unanimously rated as a very good tool for stimulating and accelerating mobility. The suggestion that "for the near future, international mobility programs should be maintained" attracted a very high degree of consensus.

Six specific areas of supra-national higher education policy serving the aim of mobility scored high in the Delphi study (ranked in the order of support received):

a. the introduction of an entitlement to export student grants;
b. the establishment of networks of information between exchanging institutions;
c. a European top up grant, which would be centrally distributed (e.g by the EC) and which would take account of and supplement the national grant where available
d. an institutional responsibility to offer in each course of study the possibility of one or more modules which should be studied abroad at another institution
e. the general introduction of a European credit-points system (similar to the present European Credit Transfer System) should be considered for national and international programs;
f. a central European information network containing courses and modules offered by European institutions, including quantitative information on courses and modules as well as information on quality.

3.3.7 Summarizing schedule

In the following figure, the results of the statements from the statistical analysis of the first and second round are scheduled in terms of general scores. This is the total of all scores of all participants, regardless of country and/or group differences.

Consequences of Internationalization

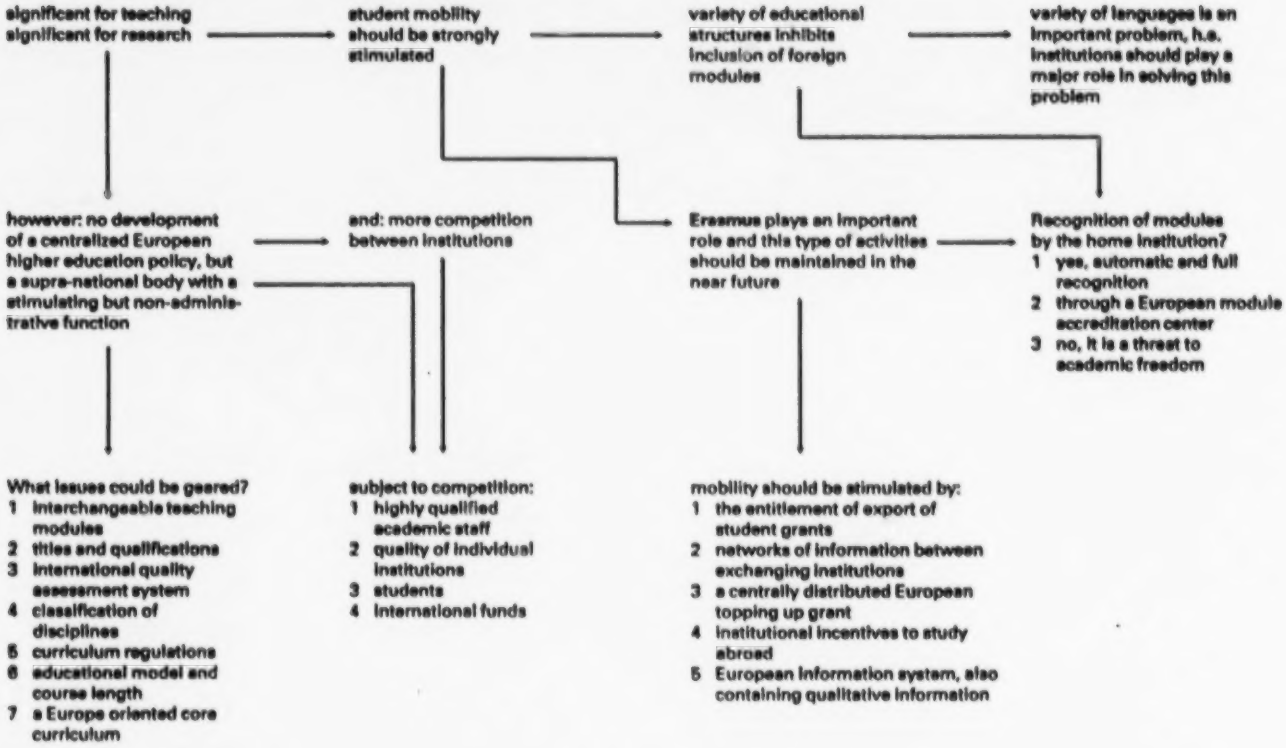

significant for teaching
significant for research
student mobility should be strongly stimulated
variety of educational structures inhibits inclusion of foreign modules
variety of languages is an important problem, h.e. institutions should play a major role in solving this problem
however: no development of a centralized European higher education policy, but a supra-national body with a stimulating but non-administrative function
and: more competition between institutions
Erasmus plays an important role and this type of activities should be maintained in the near future
Recognition of modules by the home institution?
1 yes, automatic and full recognition
2 through a European module accreditation center
3 no, it is a threat to academic freedom
What issues could be geared?
1 interchangeable teaching modules
2 titles and qualifications
3 international quality assessment system
4 classification of disciplines
5 curriculum regulations
6 educational model and course length
7 a Europe oriented core curriculum
subject to competition:
1 highly qualified academic staff
2 quality of individual institutions
3 students
4 international funds
mobility should be stimulated by:
1 the entitlement of export of student grants
2 networks of information between exchanging institutions
3 a centrally distributed European topping up grant
4 institutional incentives to study abroad
5 European information system, also containing qualitative information

figure 3. Summarizing results of the Delphi study on the possibilities and potentialities of a more central European policy.

3.4 Major obstacles for enhanced internationalization

In the O'Callaghan et al document (1990, part 1) a number of issues are presented as being major issues of debate for future higher education policy in Europe. They are: the demographic development, the cluster of access/participation and mobility, the relation with the labor market including human resources development, the disciplinary curriculum development, the structure of the systems, quality and evaluation of performance, management, autonomy and research. In the Delphi study too, most of these issues scored high on the constructed political agenda of the national higher education scene. As decisive for a Europe oriented higher education policy, four issues were identified in the Delphi-study as dominant themes. The absence of solutions will endanger meaningful future European policy.

3.4.1 Difference in structures and the maintenance of national autonomy

The first problem is the diversity in higher education structures in the 12 EC-countries. Every country has its own model, including differences in the number of cycles, timing of (first/second) degrees, course length, post-graduate education facilities, short courses, separate streams or institutions for higher vocational education etcetera. In this cacophony of differences, which are individually understandable (and no doubt valuable), enhanced cooperation and mobility are hard to achieve. In contract to, for instance, the United States, the diversity in European higher education is embedded in the different structures in the 12 countries (which are all supposed to have equal quality), while in the USA the basic pattern of institutions is relatively simple (see chapter 4) and the diversity is

achieved by differences of institutional specialization and a accepted variation in the level of quality.

It is unlikely that nations would be willing to give up their higher education structure for another one. Why should they, and would they be better of with a different structure? It is the content that counts! A policy of coordination of structures should therefore not start with attempts to structure uniformly, but should visualize the differences in content and quality between institutions and courses within the community. As a second step, the institutions might harmonize their structures whenever this is productive for their policy. In that respect, a central European quality assessment system is more important for the harmonization than a probably endless debate on the structure. Nevertheless, if some progress could be made in the "structure-debate" it should not be avoided.

3.4.2 Languages

The second problem recognized is the variety of languages. Within the EC, nine official languages are recognized. If other West-European countries were to be included the number would rise to 12 and if East-European official languages would be added the total of at least 18 different languages will form an important socio-political and cultural obstacle. In that respect, the US has a clear advantage in terms of higher education policy, being a federation of 50 different states with a common language. Would the introduction of one "academic" language be a step in the right direction? According to a large majority of the respondents of the Delphi study, this would be the case. If one could choose, which language would it be:

figure 4. if an academic language were to be agreed upon, which one would it be?

* English = 61.5 %
* French = 10.4 %
* German = 8.7 %
* Spanish = 3.4 %

note: the question was an open question in which only one language could be chosen was answered by around 50% (357) of the respondents

The fact that languages are, and in the near future will continue to be, a major obstacle has to be accepted. Would the institutions of higher education have some responsibility for dealing with this problem? Yes, according to respondents, they "should play a major role in solving this problem". This statement received support throughout all groups, with the universities most in favor.

3.4.3 Recognition of courses

3.4.3.1 Introduction

A factor that causes problems for the mobility of students is the issue of recognition of their foreign educational performance by their home institution. The question of recognition of programs, courses and/or modules, is one of the most complicated issues in the areas of future cooperation between institutions and mobility of students. It directly interferes with the issue of academic autonomy of institutions. The undisputed basis for substantive academic freedom (see f.i. Berdahl, 1971) is the right of faculty to decide upon the content, method of teaching and

examination. Being forced to accept other, in their opinion possibly inferior, courses from other institutions, might violate that basic right. In practice, the difficulty of reaching agreements on supra-national curriculum regulations in the field of medicine, engineering and architecture can be explained by the fear of an increasing oversight threatening academic freedom.

The results of a number of conflicting alternatives presented on this issue in the Delphi-study illustrated the confusion contained in this issue. The contrasting statements "automatic and full recognition of foreign modules by the home institutions should be guaranteed" and "academic freedom of home institutions implies no automatic acceptance of modules from other institutions" were both accepted. Statistically the alternative of the automatic and full recognition scored more strongly than the latter.

3.4.3.2 Previous attempts

Much effort is undertaken to solve the issue of recognition of foreign qualifications at the secondary and post-secondary level of education. It started in the Sixties and Seventies with long and convoluted negotiations on curriculum comparison which were the basis of a limited number of European regulations/directives. It was obvious, however, that this would not be the final solution for the hundreds of disciplines that would have to undergo such a comparative analysis. A second strategy was the introduction of a general guideline which would facilitate general acceptance of diplomas for vocational education under certain conditions. Today a complex and opaque network of regulations of a number of existing supra-national bodies exists. The following figure summarizes the majority of the regulations (with acknowledgements to Peter van Dijk, Ministry of Education and Science of the Netherlands).

figure 5. summary of regulations regarding the recognition of higher education programs and courses in the EC countries.

Council of Europe:

* European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities (Paris, 1953)
* European Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study (Paris, 1956)
* European Convention on the Academic Recognition of University Qualifications (Paris, 1959)
* Protocol to the European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas leading to Admission to Universities (Strassbourg, 1969)

UNESCO:

* Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees concerning higher education in the states belonging tot the European region (Paris, 1979)

EC:

* Directives on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications: doctors, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, midwives, pharmacists and architects (various years)
* Council directive (Dec 21, 1988) on a formal system for the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years duration.

This impressive list of regulations shows however that the majority of higher education disciplines is not catered for, especially in the university sector. Berg (1990, p. 68) analyzed the problems of recognition. A selection:

* federal state structures with highly decentralized administrations affecting the organization of the education sector
* diversified educational structures which render the comparisons which must be made between educational systems difficult. These problems are directly related to those originating in the lack of uniform or corresponding terminologies and insufficient, inadequate, or difficult-to-manage information
* diversity in curricular structure and content found in certain countries of the region
* the lack of homogeneity of credentials and diplomas for certain professions as the result of national laws
* lack of adequate and easily recognized and understood indicators for the evaluation of academic and professional competence in order to facilitate the recognition of study, diplomas and degrees.

3.4.3.3 Possible scenarios

Theoretically, three strategies can be put forward to solve the problem of recognition.

First, continuation of the tradition of the recognition through Europe-wide directives, as was tried in the Sixties and Seventies and which is still the basis of the recognition approach of the general guideline now used. Continuation of discussion on formulation does not seem to be the most productive way of solving this problem. Alternative schemes will have to be

designed in the future.

Second, the comparison of curricula in higher education by institutions themselves or by an supra-national agency. This approach, partly overlapping the first, is being studied in the initiative that has been taken by the University of Groningen in the Netherlands (6).

Third, a scenario which comes close to the US situation, in which a minimum of structural coordination is contained in the 50 state higher education systems and a number of policy instruments are used to identify differences in content and quality between the institutions. Related to such an approach, in the Delphi study, an intermediate solution was presented to the respondents: "automatic and full recognition by the home institution would be guaranteed if a European module accreditation center accredits the module. The development of such a supra-national institution should be considered". The idea rated a relatively high degree of support.

Combined with the high scores on the development of an international quality assessment system in other propositions in the questionnaires, the conclusion can be drawn that, if automatic and full recognition through regulation is not a possibility for the future, the combined development of a European version of the US accreditation systems together with other international quality assessment procedures and the use of a number of performance indicators (7) might be the basis of a solution to this complicated problem. The public availability of quality judgments, might in the long run be an important stimulative factor for institutions to enhance their performance.

3.4.4 Export of student grants and loans

A fourth obstacle for enhanced internationalization is the impossibility of export of national student grants for study abroad, combined with the difficulty of covering additional expenses.

Of the alternatives presented to arrive at a possible solution, the possibility of exporting of student grant facilities combined with a centrally distributed European top-up grant received the most favorable rating.

CHAPTER 4. The US case: the potentiality of federal higher education policy

4.1 Introduction

If a European higher education policy were to be developed, it would only be able to render some success if the main responsibilities on policy formulation remained decentralized. An interesting case for comparative analysis, is the US higher education policy. Higher education policy in the USA is formally under the authority of the states. According to the constitution, the Tenth Amendment "established the principle that education in general was not under federal jurisdiction; thus it fell by default to state jurisdiction" (Berdahl, 1987 p. 40). "The conditions in each state determine form and powers" of the way in which higher education policy is shaped (Glenny, 1985 p.13).

The states have been, since the 1960s, increasingly active in shaping higher educational policy. A large number of studies by state governing and coordinating boards, consultants or study commissions have produced a flood of documents in nearly all states.
McGuinness (1986, appendix) guides us through the significant titles of policy documents that express the massive attention paid to it by the states (8).

4.2 Balance of power

In the balance of power between federal and state authority on higher education policy, the federal legislator has authority limited to the following four concrete instruments (9):

a. the federal student grant and loan system

b. the allocation of money for basic research, through the National Science Foundation

c. the tax-laws which secure tax-deductibility of private donations to higher education institutions (10)

d. the gathering of information at federal, state and institutional level via the National Center for Educational Statistics.

The role of the federal government in higher education has been of vital importance in history and has not always been limited to the four instruments. If the history of federal involvement in higher education in the US is analyzed, political initiatives on the federal level were accepted for five different types of reason:

1. To catalyze the development of the system at certain moments in history, whenever the decentralized model could not cope with all the changes required.
   Examples are the Land-grant Acts (1862 and 1890, see Liggio and Meiners, 1989 p. 224), which more or less set the system of state higher education in motion, and the development of the community college system as an expression of the need for a new school type for specific social groups.

2. As a necessary coordination of policy for issues in which decentralization and diversity would not be productive to the needs of the system at a macro-level.
   A good example is the simple educational model: a first degree is the bachelor's degree and the second is the master's degree. The qualitative level is not subject to general agreement (the quality of

degrees vary considerably between "Ivy league" institutions and "US academic Siberia", see for instance Cartter, 1966), but the basic structure is. All bachelor programs are four years, all master programs on top of the baccalaureate are one or two years. This very basic agreement has no influence on the great diversity within the system.

3. For the central distribution of funds where decentralized distribution would not be in the best interest of a competitive system.
   An important part of research (especially basic research) is, for instance, funded on a competitive basis through the National Science Foundation, the US research council which allocated over 11 billion dollars in 1989.

4. To achieve specific political goals formulated at the federal level and difficult to implement at the decentralized level.
   Here are three different examples. First of all the pursuit of a high level of accessibility as a expression of social and economic need. The introduction of the present student aid system (the so called Pell Grant and Stafford Loan) provides from the federal level a basic facility to the accessibility of the system. The system is complemented by a network of institutional and (in some states) state facilities to provide educational opportunities. Second, also directed at access, is a specific measure in the form of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (better known as the GI-Bill, 1944) which offered educational opportunities to War Veterans. Third, there is the dark page in American history of the McCarthy era in which a "Red Hunt" was organized with the aim of protecting American society (11).

5. To set up a central information bureau to gather and compare information, at the state and institutional level, which is open to the public (National Center for Education Statistics).

These initiatives left the states' primary responsibility untouched. The higher education system in the US remained a collection of 50, sometimes very different, higher education systems. Any attempts to introduce new federal initiatives have to overcome major opposition (see for instance Kerr, 1982 p. 176) or are carefully monitored as to their effects on state and institutional autonomy (Meiners and Amacher, 1989). There is a basic lack of trust in the federal government and the reasons for new federal initiatives must be very convincing before a proposal is considered. In addition to the different type of separation of power between the legislator and the executive in the US compared to Europe (12) this basic lack of trust is the explanation of why the federal department of education has never achieved an influential position in the higher education debate, as it has in most European countries. In 1953, President Eisenhower founded the department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Carter Presidency created the Department of Education, which had a hard time during the Reagan administration, but was not abolished.

4.3 Favorable factors in US higher education

Monitoring the US example to determine whether a supra-national policy on the European level is a future possibility, without endangering the relative autonomy of the individual countries, requires an understanding of the specific favorable conditions in US higher education. These conditions contribute to the relative success of the balance of power.

The conditions are:

a. one language (in Europe a large number of languages)

b. uniformity in educational structure but publicly known and accepted diversity of quality standards of institutions (in Europe: diversity of structure and uniformity in quality)

c. within the US, a pattern of student mobility as a rule (while in Europe it is still an exception). The mainly modular structure enables students to be mobile (in Europe no significant supra-national arrangements available)

d. multiple constituencies are sources of innovation in stead of federal authorities. In particular, the notion of consumer sovereignty is more strongly developed in the US than in Europe. An additional advantage is the greater financial independence from government

e. a notion of quality difference and competition between institutions for students, funds, faculty etc.

4.5 Conclusions

The US example shows that a supra national policy without interference in the states' autonomy is a possibility. The fact that US higher education has one basic structure with accepted differences in quality between institutions does not lead to a lack of system transparency for society in general and consumers in particular. On the contrary. The fact that the differences in quality are the result of a combination of peer review and ranking according to a number of performance indicators -although a permanent subject of intense discussion- offers consumers the possibility of a well grounded choice. The uniform structure stimulates mobility. Moving from one institution to another is possible without having to change language (excluded a slight adaptation of slang and accent) or adjust to completely different and often confusing structures. Federal higher

education policy has in the US proven to be successful whenever innovation was required that could not be provided by the institutions or the state itself. Furthermore, it plays an important role in the realization of a limited number of generally accepted policy goals such as affirmative action and accessibility.

CHAPTER 5. Towards an agenda for European higher education policy

5.1 The need for a coordinating European higher education policy

In chapter 1 the question was raised whether increasing attention on a supra-national level was necessary for the formulation of future higher education policy. A hypothesis was formulated: "The socio-political and economic development of Western-Europe calls for a more supra-national oriented higher education policy". The sources used indicate that the external pressures on higher education in Europe should lead towards a coordinated and more integrated higher education policy. But clear system-intrinsic restrictions have to be taken into account as well as a limitation on the subjects involved. It can be concluded that the hypothesis received conditioned support.

The material reviewed showed, as a partial answer to research question 3 (limitations in terms of national, political or bureaucratic boundaries), that at least five barriers can be distinguished that can obstruct a European higher education policy:

1. the persons primarily responsible (especially the politicians) have clear reservations
2. it supposes a shift from national to international orientation, while the predominant orientation is still directed towards national interests and priorities
3. Further success is hampered by the structural diversity of higher education systems in the various countries that cannot be overcome without the introduction of either more harmonization or knowledge regarding the qualitative difference between institutions
4. the different languages form an important practical barrier
5. the present EC treaty has, in terms of powers allocated, reached its

maximum possibility in promoting cooperation/mobility through separate programs. A discussion should take place as to whether the EC should gain some restricted authority on educational issues.

Furthermore major concrete issues should be resolved in the near future:

a. the formal authority of the EC regarding educational affairs in the future. Presently the powers are limited and given national interests it will not facilitate conditions under which the authority of the EC can be expanded

b. languages. A possible, but unlikely solution, could be the introduction of a one academic language. If this would be considered, the English language gained the largest support

c. recognition of courses. The present methods of formal recognition have reached their limits. Further increase of automatic recognition could touch upon the issue of academic freedom and autonomy of institutions of higher education. The desire to solve this problem causes a mixture of conflicting opinions. The development of some sort of Europe-wide accrediting agency together with international assessment systems and the use of a number of performance indicators, might form the basis of the solution of this complicated problem

d. export of student grant and loans. The existence of national student grants and loan systems which are only exportable in a limited number of cases of foreign study is a clear handicap in the pursuit of mobility.

This leads to a negative conclusion regarding the first research question: "could the present EC-activities be upgraded to function as a vehicle for supra-national policy?" The scope of the present programs is, due to their

external conditions, too limited for the development of a supra-national policy.

Nevertheless, the development of a supra-national body with a stimulating but not administrative function (for instance the EC) could lead to more cohesion and coordination in European higher education policy. Answering research question number 4 (concrete issues) , prime targets for international coordination could be:

* the introduction of interchangeable teaching modules
* the harmonization of titles and qualifications
* the development of an international quality assessment system
* the classification of disciplines
* the harmonization of curriculum regulations, regulating a minimum content for studies
* the harmonization of the educational model and the course length
* the introduction of a Europe-oriented core curriculum
* the development of an international quality assessment system.

Furthermore, a European higher education policy could stimulate, propose/decide:

a. the introduction of an entitlement to export student grants
b. the establishment of networks of information between exchanging institutions
c. a centrally distributed European top up grant, which would be centrally distributed (e.g by the EC) and which would take account of and supplement the national grant where available
d. the institutional responsibility to offer in each course of study the possibility of one or more modules which should be studied abroad at another institution

e. the general introduction of a European credit-points system (similar to the present European Credit Transfer System) for national and international programs

f. a central European information network containing courses and modules offered by European institutions, including quantitative information on courses and modules as well as information on quality as is available.

A further step could be:

1. a European student grants and loan system
2. a European Research Council
3. European networks and study centers
4. a European higher education policy:
   * to catalyze desired development
   * to coordinate basic structures
   * distribute funds
   * design policy instruments for specific policy goals.

In research question 3 the possible limitations for a supra-national higher education policy "in terms of potential effectiveness, efficiency and system dynamics" were addressed. The analysis shows that an eventual European higher education policy should not copy the failures of policy directing at the national levels, and not become another paper tiger bureaucracy. The possibilities of centrally governing higher education institutions are seriously limited and many concrete issues cannot effectively be addressed through central activities. Mechanisms should, in principle, be self-regulatory and enhanced competition between institutions should be a stimulating factor. The competition could be directed to:

1. competition for highly qualified academic staff

2. competition related to quality of individual institutions
3. competition for students
4. competition for international funds.

The fifth research question was looking for usable examples of higher education policy on a supra-national level. The federal structure of the US shows an interesting case of a coordinating federal policy which does not endanger the autonomy of the separate states. There are, however, a number of favorable conditions in the US compared to Europe for a "supra-national higher education policy". These are: one language, one basic educational structure, a strong tradition of mobility and some particular innovative factors (the serving of multiple constituencies and competition). Above that, a large number of study centers produce valuable information for the public and policy makers. On the European level, these centers of expertise have no counterparts. Reformulation and extension of the tasks of EURYDICE and CEPES (UNESCO) might be a solution. Notwithstanding these difference, the federal structure of US higher education could be a useful example for the future debate on European higher education policy.

5.2 An agenda for European higher education policy?

The time is ripe for a fundamental discussion on the plausibility and potentiality of a European higher education policy. In this study, it is concluded that a restricted, coordinated and integrative higher education policy should be discussed. In terms of logical order, this should imply six actions for the short term:

1. the formulation of mutual goals that will function as a frame of reference for future policy development
2. a principal discussion on the division of power between the supra-

national level embedded in the respective autonomy of the individual countries

3. amending the EC regulations as the result of the discussion under 1 and 2
4. evaluating and analyzing the tool kit of higher education policy as a basis for the development of a renewal of existing policy-directing paradigms aimed at self-regulatory mechanisms and the avoidance of unproductive bureaucracy
5. solving a number of concrete problems:
   a. discussion on the introduction of a European quality assessment system, based on (at least) peer reviews and performance indicators, which produce publicly available information
   b. connection of the European quality assessment system and the -through present methods unsolvable- problem of recognition of programs and courses. Qualitative information on the programs offered by the institutions could be the settlement of the present problems
   c. introducing a European student grant and loan system
   d. enhancing the attention on and programs related to the achilles heel of the large number of languages
   e. discussing eventual harmonization of some essential elements of the educational structure.
6. improving the analysis of available data through existing networks. In this respect it might be possible to enhance the position of EURYDICE by adding an independent division for higher education research, as a European center of expertise.

NOTES

1. In the academic year 1989-1990, a large scale Delphi-study was carried out under the title "Policy instruments for higher education in the Western Europe of the future". Around 700 participants contributed by filling in three consecutive questionnaires. Seventeen countries were included in Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Eight groups form each country were invited to participate:
   a. the most senior officer of all universities (or institutions with university status) in all countries. In the various countries, this role has different titles: Vice-Chancellor, President, Rector, voorzitter van het college van bestuur etc.
   b. the most senior officer of non-university institutions in countries with a binary system (for instance: the polytechnics, Fachhochschulen, regional colleges, instellingen voor hoger beroepsonderwijs). Owing to the very large number of these institutions of this type in the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Norway, a random selection of the number of institutions was decided upon.
   c. the chairmen of national advisory bodies, national research councils, Academies of Science and intermediate organizations.
   d. the chairmen of national student unions
   e. Parliamentary representatives specializing in higher education policy from all parties represented in Parliament
   f. The largest 15 companies, in terms of sales, per country
   g. Fifteen higher education specialists per country, chosen at random, who have published on issues relevant to the research project in the English language in the period 1980-1988
   h. The most senior officer of universities in countries with a uniform system (Finland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland)

   The study is carried out under the supervision of the University of Amsterdam and the results of this study will be published in 1991.

2. An interesting issue of future debate of national research funding, is the issue of increased international competition of industry. As Derek Bok, president of Harvard states: "science respects no national boundaries. (...) With information exchanged so freely, it is relatively easy for business enterprises in one country to learn basic discoveries made in another. By reading scientific journals, sending scientists to international meetings, monitoring patents and trade journals, and encouraging graduate students to study abroad, Japanese and European concerns can readily stay abreast of scientific advances in the United States and quickly put them to use for their own commercial advantage" (Bok, 1990 page 17). This phenomenon, which in the US led to dubious proposals by politicians and institutions, could in an internationally oriented pattern of behavior in science projects at national universities in Europe become a scapegoat for national governments to reduce their support to basic research.

3. This distinction is more abstract than for instance the document published by Commission of the European Communities: Memorandum on the rationalization and coordination of vocational training programs at community level, August 21, 1990 COM(90) 334.

4. Language is considered to be the Achilles heel "in the construction of the Internal Market, namely the need for many more people capable of working through at least two Community languages. Lack of capacity to communicate is a technical barrier to free movement; it is also a handicap to the increasing business and trading connections within the Community" (EC, 1988 p. 14).

5. In 1989 the "Task Force Human Resources, Education Training and Youth" was established as a part of the Brussels bureaucracy. Its formation is an acknowledgement of the growing importance of education policy as a subject of EC policy. A further step in the hierarchy would be the upgrading of the Taskforce to a Directorate General, but it will probably take a number of years before the Commission can propose such a change.

6. The Center for Research on University Education in Groningen is organizing a conference on comparison of curricula in higher education in 1991, in order to establish a methodological approach in curriculum comparison.

7. In the Delphi study, second round, participants were asked to judge a number of performance indicators related to quality and quality assessment. Ranked in the order of support given, the following indicators were distinguished:
   * academic reputation of the academic staff
   * external peer review on the contents of the curriculum
   * completion rates
   * external peer review on the teaching process
   * average duration of student' stay
   * student evaluation of staff teaching motivation
   * entrance qualifications of students
   * formal qualification of staff
   * number of Ph.D.s
   * percentage of staff member with a Ph.D.

8. McGuinness, Director of the Education Commission of the States, presents a number of Green and White Paper titles in his handbook 1988: "Challenge-Obligation-Opportunity: the Imperative for Excellence in Higher Education" (Alabama, 1983), "Quality Development in Higher Education to Meet the Future Needs of Arkansas" (1984), "Investing in Connecticut's Future: A Strategic Plan for Higher Education" (1986), "A Path to Excellence in Public Higher Education in Florida (1985), "The Eighties and Beyond: A Commitment to Excellence" (Georgia, 1983), "The Future of Higher Education in Idaho" (1983), "Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Kentucky" (1985), "Maryland Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education" (1986), "Putting Our Minds Together: New Directions for Michigan Higher Education" (1984), "Postsecondary Education in Minnesota: A Commitment to Quality, Access and Diversity" (1984), "Pathways to Accountability and Excellence: A Final Report on the Status and Future of Public Higher Education in Mississippi (1979), "Towards the 21st Century" (Nebraska, 1984), "The Future is Excellence" (New Mexico, 1983), "The Challenge and the Choice" (New York, 1985), "Tomorrow's Expectations, Challenges for Today" (North Carolina, 1985), "Higher Education in South Carolina: An Agenda for the Future" (1986), "Informing the Future: A Plan for Higher Education in the Eighties" (Texas, 1980), "The Paramount Duty" (Washington, 1985), "Revitalization

and Renewal" (West-Virginia, 1984). The increase of interest is also highlighted in the increase of the number of Blue Ribbon commissions. In 1986, McGuinness pointed to the increase in commissions in the Eighties with the task of reshaping the state higher education landscape: in the period 1980-1986, 40 commissions focussed on higher education in the states.
McGuinness (1986) summarizes the issues that motivate initiation of state studies on higher education studies:

* a need for a strong tie between higher education and the state's economy
* an overall mismatch between the way higher education is organized and delivered and the changing educational needs of the state and its people
* a recognition of the connection between quality of higher education and the quality of the public schools
* concerns that the higher education system may be overextended
* actual or potential duplication of high-cost graduate and professional programs
* visible conflict between the aspirations of two institutions
* legislative reaction to intense institutional lobbying
* proposals to close, merge or change the mission of institutions
* concerns about the need for improvement among the many institutions offering one- and two-year vocational, technical or occupational programs
* concerns about the effectiveness of the state coordinating or governing agency.

9. The federal influence on higher education is, through general legislation which is geared to the pursuit of a list of social goals such as equality among the races, measures to overcome discrimination against women, environmental protection, health-care services, safety in the workplace, minimum wage-laws (see Bok, 1982 p. 7-8). Another example is the anti-trust legislation.

10. This "function" of the federal government is seldom mentioned in the analyses of the formal governance structure of US higher education. Yet it is to a large extent the engine of the important private sector (1841 institutions of post secondary education are private in the US, 1548 are public, according to the Carnegie Foundation, 1987, p 5.). The fact that this implicit public funding through tax-deductible contributions is often overseen, is one of the reasons why the financial independence of private institutions from government is overestimated.

11. "The most conspicuous feature of the immediately post-World War II years in academe was the "Red Hunt" carried out on many university campuses by the Dies Committee, aided and abetted by Senator McCarthy, whose line was communists in government, while the Dies Committee pursued radicals on college campuses and in the labor movement and the entertainment world" (Smith, P. Killing the Spirit, New York, 1990 p. 137).

12. The fact that the powers of government and the de facto initiative to present legislation are in different hands in most West-European countries on the one side and the US on the other, generates misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The fact that the European

government bureaucracies (which are in fact the designers of higher education policy) are compared with the much smaller bureaus of the executive (which has a more implementing and accounting function) is the underlying theme in this misunderstanding. Comparing the number of persons involved in the process of advising the federal or state legislators (the Congressmen and Senators) and in designing higher education policy, the size of the US bureaucracy is much more like that of the West-European countries with the exception of some very centralized countries like France and Spain. (see for instance White, 1989).

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